

Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers September 1, 2005

Michigan News

Welcome New NETS Members

Many thanks to the members of the Michigan NETS (Network of Employers for Traffic Safety) ... <http://www.michigan.gov/michnets> Advisory Council for sponsoring the Traffic Safety Symposium that took place on August 17, 2005 at the Town Hall at Steelcase in Grand Rapids. Close to one-hundred individuals registered for the conference and we welcome our newest Michigan NETS members to our traffic safety coalition.

Crash Survivors Network

The Crash Survivors Network works in partnership with Kettering University in community outreach to promote crash safety. The founders of this non-profit group's lives were changed forever in 2003 by a fatal car crash to a family member. The following website was developed in order to reach out to others. The founders want to share the helpful support resources they've found and invite others to share their experiences. Together their hope is to help reduce the many tolls families experience after a fatal car crash. <http://www.crashsurvivorsnetwork.org>

NHTSA's Safety Belt Award Program

Michigan NETS members, SBC Supply Chain Logistics-Midwest, is part of one of the country's largest telecommunications providers serving more than 54 million access lines nationwide. SBC recently was awarded the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's prestigious safety belt award, Buckle Up America. SBC has five locations in Michigan located in Livonia, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Saginaw and Traverse City. Four of the five locations had 100% safety belt compliance and the fifth had 85%. Congratulations to SBC for a nearly perfect record. For more information on how you can qualify for this prestigious award, please log onto the following website: <http://www.michigan.gov/michnets> and link to "Safety Belt Award program," under the quick links.

Ford Motor Co. Shares The Wealth With Other Automakers

Ford Motor Co. has announced that it has licensed its patented BeltMinder system to four other automakers at no charge. The system pings—a bit more assertively than other systems—at drivers if their seat belt is not fastened. The automaker won't reveal who has licensed the technology. Meanwhile, Ford is continuing to focus on safety and is working to develop safer interiors. Read the full article at http://www.freep.com/money/autonews/ford17e_20050817.htm

NETS FEATURE

The Impact Of Technology On Distracted Driving

It's hard to imagine a time without computers, the Internet, and cell phones—especially in the workplace. Current technology has revolutionized how American workers and their employers conduct business—changing the way in which we communicate to clients and colleagues, distribute and access information, as well as the frequency in which we conduct business. We can now access information with a touch of a button and share this information with click of a mouse. Technology has



Latest Traffic Safety News

Safety Groups Compile 'Top Safety Features' List

A group of safety advocates, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), have compiled a list of the "Ten Safety Features That May Save Your Life." Topping the list was seat belts. The list summarized some of the recent advancements pertaining to seat belts, including the four-point seat belt, which is being tested by Volvo for passenger car application. Used in racing cars for years, four-point seat belts typically include two vertical straps covering an occupant's chest and clicking into a lower lap belt. The premise behind these belts is to better distribute crash forces while keeping passengers firmly seated in the event of a rollover. Read the full article at

http://www.autobytel.com/content/shared/articles/templates/index.cfm/article_id_int/673/id/25334

Traffic Crashes Become Growing Threat To Police Officers

Motor vehicle crashes, not guns, were the number one killer of on-duty police officers in 1999 and 2003. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 477 officers died in car crashes in the decade ending last year. This figure was approximately 29 percent higher than from the 369 fatalities in the decade before. The Memorial Fund points to the number of civilian drivers using cell phones and other distracting devices while driving. Other experts attribute the deaths to the increased number of officers on the road and as a result of high-speed chases. Read the full article at <http://aolsvc.news.aol.com/news/article.adp?id=20050809180309990011&ncid=NWS00010000000001>

1 For more information visit <http://www.nleomf.com>

Microsoft To Launch New In-Vehicle Navigational Concept

Microsoft is in the process of launching a new in-vehicle navigational system that could be as simple as following the car ahead. Current navigational systems usually involve studying an on-screen map or listening to spoken instructions. Microsoft's system will allow drivers to pursue a cartoon-like car projected onto the windscreen in front of them. The system checks the car's location and calculates a route with the driver following the "ghost car." Read the article at

http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn7857&feedId=online-news_rss20

2005 Legislation Update On Distracted Driving Now Available

The National Conference of State Legislatures recently released its latest distracted driving report summarizing state laws and legislation. The report also provides information about research, data collection, and the legal issues associated with distracted driving. View the report at

<http://www.ncsl.org/print/transportation/cellphoneup805.pdf>

Psychologist Helps Officials In Maine Improve Dangerous Roadway

Officials in Maine are taking a new approach to improve safety on a particularly dangerous stretch of roadway that is prone to traffic crashes. Engineers, police and town officials have turned to psychologist Tom Granda of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to assist with a plan to improve safety on the roadway in question. Granda has already recommended several inexpensive measures to make the road safer including eliminating signage to prevent driver confusion and repainting pavement to make turning lanes clearer. Granda has a doctorate in human factors psychology. He and his colleagues at FHWA assess driver behaviors using test cars and simulated driving conditions. Read the full article at

<http://pressherald.maine.com/news/coast/050813woolwich.shtml>

TRIB: Inflating Tires With Nitrogen Makes Sense

According to new information by the Tire Retread Information Bureau (TRIB), filling tires with nitrogen might be the answer to maintaining proper tire inflation. TRIB states that nitrogen allows a tire to maintain more of its original properties and provides a more stable, consistent tire pressure. Other benefits of using nitrogen instead of compressed air, include increased tire life, improved fuel economy, and reduced tire aging. For more information visit www.retread.org

Proposed Roof-Strength Rules To Include SUVs

Federal regulators are expected to apply tougher roof-strength standards to sport utility vehicles (SUV). Current roof-strength standards only apply to vehicles weighing less than 6,000 pounds. The proposal will satisfy a Congressional mandate, which is part of the recently passed highway bill, to issue a new roof-strength rule. The projected cost of the new rule is \$90 million a year. According to government research, the new rule would save approximately 11 to 44 lives each year. For more information visit <http://www.aei-brookings.org/dailyregreport/archives/024825.php>

Amid Personal Tragedy, Senator Steps Out As Traffic Safety Advocate

After losing his daughter in a car crash, Senator Mike Dewine of Ohio has stepped out as a powerful voice for highway safety. His support for traffic safety initiatives can be seen in the recently passed federal highway legislation. Senator DeWine has helped to pass measures requiring NHTSA to post crash test scores on new cars, to compile data on non-crash incidents, and to conduct more research on driver education. Senator DeWine has also supported measures to require recessed power window switches and to ban the use of electronic devices that allow drivers to change traffic lights. Read the full article at http://www.usatoday.com/money/autos/2005-08-09-dewine-usat_x.htm

Maryland Survey: Drivers Concerned About Seat Belt Use, Traffic Safety

More and more Marylanders are concerned about seat belt use, according to the University of Maryland's third annual survey of driver concerns and behaviors. The percentage of drivers who say seat belts and occupant restraints are a critical concern has jumped from 58 percent to 74 percent. In addition, the percentages who say they always buckle up increased from 95 percent to 98 percent. The survey also found that more than 86 percent of respondents named underage drinking, road rage, cell phone use, and inattentive driving as major concerns. For more information visit <http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/sociss/release.cfm?ArticleID=1107>.

Drowsy Driving Identified As National Health Objective

In its statement of national health objectives, "Healthy People 2010," the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion is proposing to remove "vehicular crashes related to excessive sleepiness" as a health initiative during its 5-year review. According to NHTSA, up to 100,000 crashes each year involve drowsiness or fatigue as principal causal factor. The agency will accept comments on the initiative at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/data/midcourse/comments/account.asp> You will need to register before accessing article.

New Report Examines EDR Data As A Method For Crash Analysis

The Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Research Results Digest 298: Use of Event Data Recorder (EDR) Technology for Highway Crash Data Analysis examines the benefits and the costs of using EDR data in highway crash data analysis and research. View the report http://www.trb.org/publications/nchrp/nchrp_rrd_298.pdf.

Study Examines Who Is To Blame For Motor Vehicle Crashes

According to a new study by the University of Georgia, individuals who experience crashes that require medical treatment often attribute greater responsibility to other drivers rather than to themselves or to

weather/road conditions. Meanwhile, people who were in crashes of lesser severity attributed approximately the same amount of responsibility to themselves as they did to others. The results of the study were based on the responses of 321 crash survivors. The research suggests that drivers who accepted more responsibility than they assigned to others had greater perception of control, which may help survivors cope with the traumatic aspects of their crashes.

Study Looks At Effects Of Partial Sleep Deprivation, Alcohol On Driving

Partial sleep deprivation and alcohol consumption are a common combination, and according to new research the results may be deadly. Researchers recently analyzed the combination of partial sleep deprivation and low blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and concluded that alcohol at legal BAC levels appears to increase sleepiness and impair performance, as well as crash-risk detection. The study also found that when partially sleep deprived, women appear to be either more perceptive of increased crash risk or more willing to admit to their driving limitations than men.

Source: Sleep, Author: S. Banks P. Catchside L. Lack, R.R. Grunstein, R.D. McEvoy

Minnesota 'Lights On For Safety' Set For October 1

The Alliance of Automotive Service Providers of Minnesota (AASP-MN), in cooperation with the Minnesota State Patrol, will hold its 11th annual "Lights On For Safety" event on October 1. The event is held in conjunction with the Car Care Council's Fall Car Care Month. On this day, AASP-member technicians and automotive technical students will conduct a free inspection and replacement of most exterior vehicle light bulbs and headlamps. Troopers will be available to answer traffic safety-related questions. Since its inception, "Lights On For Safety" volunteers have installed free bulbs in over 4,000 vehicles. For more information visit <http://www.aaspmn.org/Lights%20On.htm>

States Crackdown On Distracted Driving

With distracted driving a "red-hot" topic in state legislatures, many are moving to address problems associated with behind-the-wheel cell phone use. Twenty-two states, plus the District of Columbia, have enacted laws that restrict mobile communications. While no state has prohibited cell phone use, many are expanding their scope to include prohibitions on potential distractions such as DVDs, TVs, and personal grooming. The trend comes at a time when road safety is improving. The fatality rate on U.S. highways—42,636 died on the nation's roadways in 2004—was the lowest since record keeping began 30 years ago. Read the full article at <http://www.sacbee.com/24hour/autos/story/2648887p-11145875c.html>

News from USDOT

FMCSA Issues New Hours Of Service Rule

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) issued new hours-of-service rules for commercial vehicle drivers, specifying the number of hours drivers can operate trucks without resting. The new rule replaces hours-of-service regulations that were last updated in 2003. Under the new rule, truckers can drive up to 11 hours. The regulations require drivers using sleeper berths to take at least 8 consecutive hours off duty and another two hours off duty throughout the workday. The new rule now allows short-haul operators not required to hold a commercial drivers license, like landscape crews and delivery drivers who work within a 150 mile radius of their starting point, to extend their work day twice a week. They also will no longer have to maintain logbooks. Meanwhile, a new study by FMCSA found that one in five drivers, or 20 percent, exceed 10 hours of driving during the course of their regular duties. For more information about the new hours of service rule, please visit <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov>.

NHTSA Revises National Driver Register Regulations

NHTSA has revised its procedures relating to participating in and receiving data from the National Driver Register (NDR) Problem Driver Pointer System. The modification comes after a study revealed vulnerabilities regarding enforcement of the single license requirement. It was found that states that did not check the Commercial Driver's License Information System (CDLIS) when a commercial driver's license (CDL) holder applied for a non-commercial driver's license, allowing a CDL holder to apply for a second license without detection. The rule stipulates that a state must verify an individual's eligibility to receive a license through informational checks of both the NDR and CDLIS before issuing or renewing a driver's license.

NHTSA To Conduct Research On Crash Avoidance Technologies, Systems

NHTSA is seeking information on its Advanced Crash Avoidance Technologies (ACAT) Program. The goal of the program is to determine the safety impact of new and emerging technologies to help drivers avoid crashes, reduce crash severity, and prevent injuries. While various crash avoidance technologies have been introduced, the effectiveness of these systems is not well understood. NHTSA is conducting the research programs to address the issue. The agency hopes that partnerships with motor vehicle manufacturers and suppliers will serve an important role in the program. For more information contact NHTSA's Office of Vehicle Safety Research at (202) 366-2619.

NHTSA Names Jacqueline Glassman As New Deputy Administrator

Jacqueline Glassman, chief counsel at NHTSA, has been named as the agency's deputy administrator. The decision comes as the current NHTSA chief administrator, Jeffrey Runge, is departing the agency to be the first chief medical officer of the Department of Homeland Security. With no apparent successor, it is anticipated that Glassman will become NHTSA's acting administrator.

NHTSA: Florida's Repeal Of Helmet Law Leads To Increased Deaths, Costs

According to a new report by NHTSA, there has been a substantial increase in motorcyclist deaths in Florida since the state repealed its helmet law. Fatalities in the two years following the repeal were 71 percent higher than the two years before the law change. The report found that there was an average of 181 motorcyclists killed annually in Florida in the 30 months before the repeal and an average of 280 deaths in the 30 months following the law change. In addition, the report uncovered that the total gross costs charged to hospital-admitted motorcyclists with head, brain, or skull injuries more than doubled from \$21 million to \$44 million. View the report at

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/motorcycle/FlaMCReport/pages/Index.htm>

Work-Life:

Study: Children's Fatalities On The Decline

According to a study conducted by the National Safety Council, a recent shift by drivers over the past decade to put children in the backseat of passenger vehicles, instead of the front, and buckle them up has helped cut child deaths in motor vehicle crashes. Education efforts were prompted a decade ago as a result of the deaths and injuries caused by the impact of front airbags. Automakers have since created devices to lessen the forcefulness of their impact. As a result of these efforts, government officials have found that front-seat fatalities of children have declined 46 percent since 1996. Toddlers between the ages of 1 and 3 now wear restraints 90 percent of the time as compared to 60 percent during the mid 1990s. For more information visit <http://www.nsc.org/news/nr081805.htm>

AARP Releases Fact Sheet On Older Drivers

The AARP has released a fact sheet examining data on older drivers—particularly those more than 70 years old. The fact sheet suggests ways to reduce risks for these drivers. According to AARP, drivers 65 and older drive less and have lower crash rates than younger drivers, but above age 70, the

number of crashes per mile driven rises substantially. View the fact sheet at http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/il/fs51r_drivers.pdf

Study: Despite Reductions In Teen Crashes, Still More Work To Be Done

Key aspects of graduated driver licensing (GDL) were introduced in 46 states and the District of Columbia between the 1993 and 2003. Since then, state evaluations consistently reported positive overall effects of GDL features, including nighttime and passenger restrictions. A new study investigated the changes in teen fatal crash involvement during these years and found that while there has been some progress nationally in reducing the teen crash problem, it still remains a problem. The study suggests that to achieve further progress, the gaps and weaknesses in present GDL laws need to be addressed.

Source: Traffic Injury Prevention Authors: A.F. Williams, S.A. Ferguson, J.K. Wells

International Traffic Safety News:

Study: Company Car Drivers Most Likely To Cause Fatal Crashes

New research at the UK's University of Nottingham's School of Psychology took an in-depth look at work-related traffic crashes. The researchers concluded that drivers of company cars are more likely to cause a fatal crash than to be a victim of someone else's bad driving. Speed and alcohol were two of the factors contributing to the crashes. The findings underscore the fact that on-the-job traffic crashes are the single biggest cause of employment-related deaths in the UK.

UK Investigate Speed Control Systems

The UK Department of Transport is examining the use of "intelligent speed adaptation technology," an electronic system that controls vehicle speeds remotely by computer. Essentially, the system would prohibit drivers from exceeding the speed limit. The new system is being tested at the Institute for Transport Studies at Leeds University. Read the full article at

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/08/22/ncars22.xml&sSheet=/news/2005/08/22/ixhome.html%20>

Workshop Seeks To Prevent Traffic Crashes Among Arab Countries

In an attempt to raise awareness about traffic safety in the Arab world and bring neighboring countries together, several organizations have joined forces to conduct the first International Workshop on

Traffic Engineering and Traffic Safety. The goal of the workshop is to increase cooperation among the various traffic safety agencies in the region. According to last year's statistics, traffic incidents caused more than 1 million casualties—both injuries and fatalities. The workshop will span five days and will include a series of sessions that address traffic control and management, as well as the importance of national and international cooperation in preventing traffic crashes. Read the full article at http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=1&article_id=17867

UK Study: Cell Phone Use While Driving Rises With Miles

According to research by one UK fleet management company, the likelihood of company car drivers illegally using a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel depends on how many business miles they cover. The research revealed that a total of 14 percent of low-mileage drivers admit to disobeying the UK's ban on handheld cell phone use behind the wheel, but for high mileage drivers the figure increases to 24 percent. It also found that drivers in larger companies were less likely to illegally use their phones, possibly because such companies have a clear policy on cell phone use.

Study Examines Finland Cell Phone Legislation

In 2003, Finland passed a law prohibiting the use of handheld cell phones while driving. Recently, researchers investigated the overall impact and compliance of the law. The final report indicates that the use of hands-free devices reduced handheld cell phone use, but did not reduce phone-related hazards. It also found that the effect of the law on phone use substantially declined within one year.

Source: Traffic Injury Prevention Authors: S. Rajalin, H. Summala, L. Poysti, B.E. Porter

Survey: Small, Mid-Sized UK Companies Fail To Ensure Safety

New research shows that two-thirds of small to medium sized businesses in the UK do not ensure that employees' vehicles used for work are properly maintained and insured. If employees are in a crash and the vehicle is found to be faulty, companies could face fines and the risk of prosecution under the UK's corporate manslaughter law. The results come from a survey by Enterprise Rent-A-Car and the Federation of Small Businesses. According to the survey of 500 UK employers, 42 percent did not check that the driving staff had a valid license. One in three companies whose staff often made business trips by car admitted that they never asked employees to carry out 'safety checks' before a journey.